



ENDANGERED TURKIC LANGUAGES OF CHINA

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1. Typology and Endangerment: an overview

1.1. Speakers and Geographical Distribution

Chinese Turkic languages are spoken primarily in Chinese Turkestan (Xinjiang) in northwestern China, regions that are contiguous with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Tuvan Republic, among other Turkophone Central Asian dominions. Turkic groups also reside on the edges of the Tibetan plateau in the Gansu corridor linking Chinese Turkestan with China proper and along the upper reaches of the nearby Yellow River, as well as far the northwest in Manchuria. Turkic speakers in China number close to 13 million¹, and constitute about eight ethnolinguistic groups in China: Uyghurs and other sedentary Tarim Basin residents (officially 10.7 million), Kazakhs (1.46 million), Kyrgyz (186,708), Salars (130,607), Uzbeks (10,569), Sarıg Yuğurs (ca. 7,000), Tatars (3,556), Tuva (3,260), and Fuyü Kyrgyz (880). All but Tuva and Fuyü Kyrgyz are ethnic groups (Chinese *minzu*) accorded official recognition by the Chinese state. All but the largest four have decreased in population since the 2000. In addition to Uyghur, five languages (Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tatar and Tuva) are comparatively well-described, although those with small populations in China (Uzbek, Tatar, and Tuva) have through language contact diverged from their varieties spoken west of the Pamirs (and in the case of Tuva, in south Siberia).

Several branches of Turkic are represented: West-Central Kipchak (Kazakh, Tatar), Altay-Kyrgyz (Kyrgyz, Lopnur “Uyghur,” and possibly other Tarim basin varieties), Southeastern (Uyghur, Uzbek), Oghuz (Salar), and Yenisei Turkic (Sarıg Yuğur, Fuyü “Kyrgyz”) and Sayan Turkic (Tuva).

The Turkic groups found exclusively in China include the Sarıg Yuğurs, Salars, Fuyü Kyrgyz, and various small Turkic and mixed language varieties (mostly found in Xinjiang). The latter include Abdals (a.k.a. Aynu~Eynu) and Dolans (who are both officially Uyghur), and Tagliq (who are officially Kyrgyz).

1.2. Language Endangerment

This article focuses on the Turkic languages of China which are endangered, and only briefly mentions the other Turkic languages found there. *Endangerment* refers to the possibility that the language variety may cease being used. The degree of endangerment is determined by criteria such as domains of use (e.g. home, school, market, government), size of the speaker (not ethnic) population, and the official status of the language (recognized or unrecognized; taught in schools or not; having an official writing system or not). Criteria to assist linguists, communities, and governments assess endangerment were developed by Fishman (1991, originally eight criteria), and updated by UNESCO (2003, nine criteria) and Lewis and Simons (2010, ten criteria, with subdivisions). For a detailed comparison of these assessment systems, and their application to languages, see Dwyer 2012. Table 1 below summarizes these endangered assessment models, showing the maximal version with ten criteria. (The model is called EGIDS, since it is an Extended version of Fishman’s original “Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale” (GIDS).)

Table 1. EGIDS and UNESCO scales
(adapted from Lewis & Simons 2010, Fishman 1991, UNESCO 2003)

EGIDS level	EGIDS label	EGIDS description	UNESCO Descriptor	UNESCO Factor
0	International	The language is used internationally for a broad range of functions.	Safe	4 (existing domains)
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, government at the nationwide level.	Safe	4 (existing domains)
2	Regional	The language is used for local and regional mass media and governmental services.	Safe	4 (existing domains)
3	Trade	The language is used for local and regional work by both insiders and outsiders.	Safe	4 (existing domains)

1 All are the official figures from the 2010 census, except for Fuyü (Janhunen 1996); Sarıg and Shera Yuğurs are subsumed under Yuğurs (13,700) and Tuvans are subsumed under Mongols.

4	Educational	Literacy in the language is being transmitted through a system of public education.	Safe	6 (literacy domains)
5	Written	The language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community.	Safe	6 (literacy domains)
6a	Vigorous	The language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.	Safe	1 (intergenerational transmission)
6b	Threatened	The language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generation are transmitting it to their children.	Vulnerable	1 (intergenerational transmission)
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it among themselves but none are transmitting it to their children	Definitely Endangered	1 (intergenerational transmission)
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.	Severely Endangered	1 (intergenerational transmission)
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.	Critically Endangered	1 (intergenerational transmission)
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community. No one has more than symbolic proficiency.	Extinct	4, Grade 1 (highly limited domains)
10	Extinct	No one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language, even for symbolic purposes.	Extinct	4, Grade 1 (highly ltd. domains)

An EGIDS rating is provided for each language discussed in this chapter; the above table is provided for reference to those ratings. For some languages, I provide two EGIDS ratings, when my own assessment differs from that of the *Ethnologue* (Lewis et al. 2015).²

While it is possible to consider at least one *variety* (e.g. dialect, vernacular) of every single Turkic language to be endangered in comparison to the titular languages of the CIS (e.g. Chinese varieties of Kazakh and Kyrgyz, or small regional varieties of modern Uyghur), this article leaves the detailed exploration of these latter varieties for a longer treatment. Nonetheless, enough contextual information is provided about these major Turkic varieties to show their role in the region.

The endangerment status of the main Turkic varieties of China is summarized in Table 2 below. Minor varieties (e.g. Lopnur, Eynu, Ili Turki, Täräñchi, and Dolan Uyghur, etc.) are discussed in this article but omitted from the table. Languages are listed in descending order of *speaker* population size (which in most cases must be estimated, since comprehensive surveys have not been possible, and the census only counts ethnic affiliation). For all but the three largest groups, schooling in the language is unavailable; the available school language’s code is given in parentheses (e.g. cmn Mandarin). Most populations are declining or showing modest increases in the past decade, with the exception of the Salars; however, the number of speakers in all populations does not appear to be increasing. Nonetheless, speaker attitudes towards their languages are largely positive (6 of 9 varieties below).

2 EGIDS scores are included for every language in the *Ethnologue*, which is currently the most comprehensive encyclopedic catalogue of the world’s languages. By virtue of its scale, the work’s data for Chinese Turkic languages is partly out of date, leading to more moderate EGIDS scores than the actual current language status *in situ*, according to this author. One of the flaws of the EGIDS model is that regional languages automatically receive a very safe score (e.g. Uyghur’s “2 provincial” status), even if all the other indicators point to rapid shift. Any differences in assessment are explained in each section below.

Table 2. Major Turkic Languages of China: Endangerment Overview

Lang	spkr.s.	pop.	EGIDS	Status	Orthography	Schools	Media	attitudes
Uyghur	10 m.*	10.07 m.	2	provincial; vigorous	yes - Arabic	limited	TV, radio, print	positive
Kazakh	1.4 m.*	1.46 m	3	trade; vigorous	yes - Arabic	limited	some TV, radio, print	positive
Kyrgyz	180,000*	186708	5 (2)**	written	yes - Arabic	limited	some TV, radio, ltd print	positive
Salar	80000*	130607↑	7	shifting	no	(cmn)	none	negative
Uzbek	5000*	10569↓	8a (5)**	moribund	yes - Arabic	(uig)	no	neutral
S. Yuğur	4600*	7000*	8a	moribund	no	(cmn)	none	positive
Tuva	3000*	3260	6b	threatened	no (mvf, kaz, cmn)	(mvf,cmn)	none	positive
Tatar	800↓	3556↓	8b	moribund	no (kaz, uig)	(kaz, cmn)	none	positive
Fuyü Gïrgïs	10*	880	9 (8b)**	nearly extinct	no	(cmn)	none	negative

*Estimated size. (Sarïğ Yuğur population, also estimated, listed with Shera Yuğur in census.)
**Our assessment differs from that of the (*Ethnologue*); see individual language descriptions below.

Below, we turn to the generalizations that can be made regarding the language-contact environment and formal characteristics of these languages.

1.3. Language contact environment

The high degree of mutual intelligibility already enjoyed by Turkic languages across Eurasia is even more pronounced among the Turkic languages of China, due to their contact with dominant languages. All Turkic speaking regions of China are in contact with *two* varieties of Mandarin Chinese. In the media, schools, and government, Turkic speakers interact with Standard Mandarin in both spoken and written form. In everyday interactions, however, Turkic speakers encounter and use the local variety of Mandarin (Northeast for Fuyü, and Northwest Mandarin for all others.) The latter is a variety of northern Chinese whose syntax and morphology have come to closely resemble that of Turko-Mongolic languages: it is a head-final SOV language with a rudimentary case system and clause chaining.

Uyghur is a regional lingua franca in Xinjiang, which has resulted not only in widespread Turkic multilingualism in the region, but also in convergence in the lexicon and other areas of language between Uyghur and particularly the numerically smaller Turkic languages there. Thus for example, Chinese Uzbek is largely indistinguishable from Standard Uyghur.

1.4. Overview of language features

Since several branches of Turkic are represented in China, the main generalization that can be drawn is, as expected of languages on the periphery, that there tends to be both striking innovations and also in some instances conservation of Old Turkic elements.

Starting with the sound system, with the exception of Kïpchak (esp. Lobnur), the symmetrical system of eight (short) vowel phonemes (a ä i ĩ o ö u ü)³ tends to be more weakly preserved in roots than in core Turkic areas. None of the languages have phonemic vowel length, except Kïpchak, as can be seen in Table 3 below.

3 The languages described here use many orthographies; in order to allow these data to be comparable, I have regularized all forms to one orthography, which includes the following: *c z ž š č j j x ğ h* to represent IPA [tʰ dʒ/z ʒ ʃ ʧ dʒ j χ ɣ h], and *ä e ē i ĩ ö ü* to represent [ɛ e ə i ĩ ø y]. A colon (:) represents vowel length.

Table 3. Vowel phoneme inventories (OT=Old Turkic)

OT	a	ä	e	i	ĩ	o	u	ö	ü	a:	ä:			i:	ĩ:	o:	u:	ö:	ü:
Uy	a	ä	e	i	ĩ	o	u	ö	ü										
Kaz	a	æ	e	i	ĩ	o	u	ö	ü										
Kyr	a		e	i	ĩ	o	u	ö	ü	a:		e:				o:	u:	ö:	ü:
Uzb	a	ä	e	i		o	u	ö	ü										
Tat	a	ä	e	i	ĩ	o	u	ö	ü										
Tuv	a	ä	e	i	—	o	u	ö	ü	a:	ä:	e:		i:		o:	u:	ö:	ü:
Fuyü	a			i	ĩ	o	u	ö	ü										
Slr	a		e	i	ĩ	o	u	ö	ü										
SYuğ	a		e	i	ĩ	o	u	ö	ü	ah		eh	əh			oh	uh	öh	

Front rounded vowels tend to merge with their back counterparts, as well front i and back ĩ. Further, in several languages (e.g. Uzbek, Salar) front/back distinctions are blurred by centralization. Thus /ü/ /ö/ and /o/ are generally realized as [ʏ], [œ], [ɔ]~[ʊ], and the central vowel /i/ (IPA ĩ) is often realized as [ɤ] or [ə] (and indeed, the phoneme is often in most Chinese grammars as /ə/), while ä is usually realized as [ɛ]. Uyghur distinguishes an open ä [ɛ] (orthographically e) from a closed e [e] (orthographically é).

As in Old Turkic, not all distinctions hold for secondary syllables. In roots and secondary syllables, consonant and vowel harmony is generally preserved in native Turkic syllables and elsewhere disrupted; in some systems (such as Salar and Uzbek), the vowel inventories tendentially lose front rounded vowels.

The consonant inventories are shown below. A number of languages (Salar, Fuyü, Sarıg Yuğur) realize the phonemic voicing distinction in obstruents as an aspiration distinction (Dwyer 2007). Some languages (like Fuyü Gïrgïs) only distinguish the “voiced” from “voiceless” stops in Chinese loans. The v~w alternation is allophonic, and these, with ž, h, and f, arose via contact. Distinctions between χ~ğ or χ~q are typically allophonic, though backness harmony in such consonants has been disrupted.

Table 4. Consonantal phonemes

OT		b	t	d	k	g	q		ğ			s	z	š		č	ǰ		m	n	ŋ	l
Uy	p	b	t	d	k	g	q	χ	ğ	f	w	s	z	š	ž	č	ǰ	h	m	n	ŋ	l
Kz	p	b	t	d	k	g	q	χ	ğ	f	v	s	z	š		č	ǰ	h	m	n	ŋ	l
Kir	p	b	t	d	k	g	q	χ	ğ	f	v	s	z	š		č	ǰ	h	m	n	ŋ	l
Uz	p	b	t	d	k	g	q	χ	ğ	f	v	s	z	š	ž	č	ǰ	h	m	n	ŋ	l
Ta	p	b	t	d	k	g	q	χ	ğ	f	w	s	z	š		č	ǰ	h	m	n	ŋ	l
Tv	p	b	t	d	k	g	q	x	ğ	f	w	s	z	š		č	ǰ	h	m	n	ŋ	l
Fuyü	p	b	t	d	k	g	q		ğ	f	v	s	z	š		č	ǰ	h	m	n	ŋ	l
Sa	p	b	t	d	k	g	q	x	ğ	f	v	s	z	š		č	ǰ	h	m	n	ŋ	l
SY	p	b	t	d	k	g	q	x	ğ	f	v	s	z	š		č	ǰ	h	m	n	ŋ	l

In addition to the consonant distinctions above, Salar and Sarıg Yuğur (under contact with Mandarin and Tibetan) also distinguish a retroflex series of spirants (ʂ zɿ ʐ dzɿ) and the uvular stop ɣ [ɣ]. Chinese Tatar also distinguishes [zɿ].

Some of Chinese Turkic including Salar and Sarıg Yuğur contrast initial obstruents have surface contrasts based on aspiration (p : pʰ), whereas canonical Turkic languages in western Eurasia contrast nonfinal consonants, especially stops, in voicing (p : b). These surface contrasts are almost certainly the result of contact with Chinese.

While the canonical syllable structure in Turkic tends towards a CV(C) shape, many of the smaller and eastern Chinese Turkic languages tend towards CV(N) (N= n/ng), under the influence of Mandarin syllables. As a rule of thumb, heavy syllables attract pitch and accent; accent is typically realized as stress. Lexical stress falls on the last syllable of native stems, yet diachronic deletion and epenthesis have resulted in unpredictable stress for some native words.

In their lexicons, the Turkic languages of China share both a basic Turkic vocabulary, as well as a number of loanwords from Mandarin Chinese. Some examples of shared basic vocabulary of Turkic origin can be seen in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Cognates in Chinese Turkic Languages (In IPA; [e ə ε ø y j š] = e ě ä ö ü y ʃ, respectively)

Uyghur	Kazakh	Kyr	Uzbek	Tatar	Tuva	Salar	S. Yuğur	English
at	at	at	at	at	at	at~aht	at	name
eri-	eri-	eri-	eri-	erī~jerī-	eri-	irī-	jer-	melt
ejuq	ajıw	aju:	ājiq	ajıw~ajuw	adix	atix	(gıuşung)	bear
āmes	emes	emes	emās	emās~imās	emes	emes	emes	not, none
is	īs	is~īs	is	is	ış	(tydyn)	īs	smoke
işlät-	istet-	iştet-	işlät-	işlät-	istet-	(jarı-)	(jimsa-)	work
ojna-	ojna-	ojno-	ojnä-	ojna-	ojna-	ojna-	ojna-	play
oqur	oqır	aqır	axir	oqur	dosğaar	soğo	so	trough
öpka	ökpe	öpkö	öpkä	öpkä	ökbä	oxen~öxen	öhkbe	lung
üzük	üzik	üzük	üzik	üzik~üzük	üzük	uzix	üzğan	broken

Data adapted from: Nurbek et al. 1990 (where /i/ is represented as ə).

As for the Chinese loans, they are not just words representing technical innovations in the last century (e.g. *bingshang*, ‘refrigerator’), but also many foods (*bä(j)säj* ‘cabbage’, *č(j)ezi* ‘eggplant’, *jängjü* ‘potato’, *lazi* ‘chili pepper’. Those Turkic languages spoken in Xinjiang —unlike those spoken elsewhere in China— additionally have a number of Indo-European loans via Russian, due to the close relationship in the 1950s between the Soviet Union and China, such as *bolka* ‘(loaf) bread’, *kämpit* ‘candy,’ *kompjuter* ‘computer,’ *(i)radi’jo* ‘radio,’ *aptobus* ‘bus,’ *pojuz* ‘train,’ *mašina* ‘car; machine.’ Such terms of Russian origin are entirely absent from the Turkic languages of the Tibetan plateau (Salar and Sarıg Yuğur).

Since the early 1980s, Chinese and Russian terms for the same concept often alternate in Xinjiang Turkic languages, due to both the widespread multilingualism in Chinese, such as *marožnja* ~ *bingjiling* ‘ice cream’, *janfon*⁴ ~ *shouji* ‘mobile phone.’ When a Chinese term is preferred, it is often due to its shorter word length, e.g. *dianši* ‘television’ vs. *televvisor*.

Persian lexemes are abundant in Uyghur and Uzbek, for which both Persian and Arabic supply a good deal of abstract and legal vocabulary. Neither is true in Salar (where Arabic is limited to religion) nor among the Buddhist Sarıg Yuğurs and Tuvans (where almost no Perso-Arabic vocabulary occurs).

Chinese Turkic languages are, like other Turkic languages, agglutinating, with tense/aspect mood, voice, person suffixation on verbs and suffixes such as number and case on nouns. The function of cognate verbal suffixes, at least, may vary widely from other Turkic languages. The differentiation and declination of word classes (including e.g. adjective reduplication), nominal functionality (e.g. nouns can function as adjectives), or verbal classes (e.g. finite vs. non-finite) is however nearly identical to that of other Turkic languages. When formal or semantic anomalies in morphology exist, these are generally due to language contact effects.

1.5. Time depth of Turkic languages in China

The presence of Turkic languages in China dates to the ninth century CE: a relatively shallow time depth dating back only 12 centuries. (Yet for Turkic, this constitutes a long and illustrious time depth.) With the fall of the Old Turkic Uyghur khanate, an (Old) Uyghur kingdom flourished in the Tarim Basin from the 9th to at least the 13th century; one of those early Yenisseien waves of Turkic diaspora established a small kingdom further south in the Hexi corridor, and these peoples became know as Yuğurs. Somewhat later, during the 11–12th centuries, some of the ancestors of the modern Uyghurs in the Tarim basin, the Perso-Arabic influenced Qarakhanids, settled in the southwestern Tarim Basin

4 *jan* (tkc.) ‘side, pocket’ + *[tele]fon* ‘phone’

near Kashgar, followed by Chaghatay speakers. In the meantime, another small group of Yenisei Turkic speakers migrated from Siberia and Qarakhanid Turkic (11–12th c.), and settled in Manchuria in what would become northeastern China. Then, with the Mongol incursions from Transoxiana to central China in the 13th century came the ancestors of the modern Salars. In the centuries that followed, as the languages of Kipchak speakers were in the process of differentiating somewhat during the 15–18th centuries, these different groups nomadized over the Tianshan mountains, and settled in and around the Ghulja valley and even to a forested oasis south of the Tianshan mountains known as Lopnur. The descendents of some nomadic Turks in the Tarim Basin had become sedentary; some co-mingled with the Qarakhanids or had intermarried some centuries earlier with the descendents of the Old Uyghur khanate at Turfan or even their Tocharian or Iranian-speaking neighbors. With geographic, social or economic isolation, some of these groups differentiated over time, giving rise to the differences we see in the Tarim Basin today.

We will now survey the Turkic languages of China by family, providing some key characteristics and discussing their endangerment status.

2. Southeastern Turkic languages

The Southeastern Turkic languages are Uyghur and Uzbek, both spoken overwhelmingly in Xinjiang. Uzbek is barely spoken in China, but Uyghur comprises both the modern standard language—which serves as a lingua franca for Turkic speakers in Xinjiang—but also includes the varieties of SE Turkic spoken in the oases around the Tarim Basin and Yili valley, including the Taranchi, Ili (Yili) Turki, and Dolan varieties. (Some early classifications erroneously referred to Sarīg (Yellow) Yuğur (S. Siberian) and Salar (Oghuz) as SE Turkic. Occasionally also Sarīqolī (Iranian) is also erroneously classed as SE Turkic, probably since the latter group is officially but misleadingly called “*Tajik*” in China.) The varieties of SE Turkic spoken in Xinjiang differ not in syntax, but in phonology, morphology, and vocabulary.

2.1. Uyghur

EGIDS: 2 (provincial) (*Ethnologue*) ; viability: 6a (vigorous).

Endonym: [ʔujʰʊr] Exonyms: Wéiwù'ér, Uyghur~Uigur

Uyghurs (Ch. *Weiwu'er* 维吾尔族) numbered 10,069,346 according to the 2010 census, and are the largest Turkophone group in China, and the fifth largest ethnic group overall in China.

The language of Ghulja (Yili), together with that of the capital Ürümchi is the basis for Modern Standard Uyghur (MSU).

Uyghur enjoys a privileged *language status* compared to other Turkic languages; being the titular language of the so-called Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and enjoying the support of print and broadcast media (and, until 2002, schooling), the Uyghur language can still be considered vigorous and not endangered. Nonetheless, bilingualism in Chinese is now obligatory and is widespread; knowledge of Chinese is promoted (for Uyghur and other Chinese Turkic speakers) as the key to economic success. Thus, the domains for even Uyghur are shrinking rapidly. While speakers are not yet shifting to Chinese, the Uyghur language is replete not only with lexical copies, but also syntactic copying that can sound to elders like “translateese” (Cabras 2016).

“Modern Uyghur” is typically used an umbrella designation for the sedentary peoples of the Tarim Basin, the Qumul oasis, the Ili (Yili, Ghulja) valley, and the southern Junggarian Basin – in other words, those officially designated Uyghur within the borders of modern Xinjiang. It is dubious that all these varieties ultimately derive from the same Turkic source. Linguistically speaking, Modern Standard (Literary) Uyghur is derived from Chaghatay with a Qarakhanid admixture, and its speakers occupied the Tarim basin since the 9th century. The pre-Uyghur admixture (early eastern Turki) had contact with nomadizing Kipchak and Mongolian speakers since the 13–15th centuries; Persian and Arabic (the latter generally via the former) between the 11–15th centuries, Kazakh and Manchu since the 17th century, and Russian since the 19th century. Russian influence was particularly strong between



1920–1950; (*kommunist partijisi* ‘communist party’, *gezit* ‘newspaper’, *ajrodrom* ‘airport’, *aptobus* ‘bus’)). Iterative Chinese settlements in the area have resulted in some very early Old Chinese loans (Old Uyghur *bitik* ‘writing’ from Old Chinese *bit* 筆 ‘pen’), but the main influence of Chinese on the language has occurred since 1960.

There has been near-continuous contact between Uyghurs east and west of the Pamirs (sometimes termed Eastern and Western Turkestan, respectively), despite periodic interruptions due to local and colonial powers. With the rise of the modern nation-state, the two literary varieties, Standard Xinjiang Uyghur, and Standard Soviet Uyghur (now Standard CIS/Kazakhstani/Kyrgyzstani Uyghur) were standardized with a few differences. Chinese (Xinjiang) Uyghur is said to be based on Ghulja (Yili) Uyghur, but features were also drawn from the city of Ürümqi Uyghur (such as the articulation of /v/ as [w], whereas in Soviet Uyghur it is [v]), as well as

from other “Central dialects,” from Qumul to Yarkand. Chinese Uyghur uses an Arabic-derived alphabet, Uyghur *äräb jeziqi*, while Standard CIS Uyghur uses an Cyrillic-derived alphabet, Uyghur *siril yeziqi*, and in the lexicon where Standard Xinjiang Uyghur is heavily influenced by Chinese, in particular Mandarin Chinese, while Standard Soviet Uyghur is heavily influenced by Russian. These literary languages, *ädäbij til*, contrast with the spoken, non-normatized language, *janliq til*.

As for *linguistic characteristics*, in phonology, the following Standard Uyghur features are prominent: vowel-raising (*ejiq* ‘bear,’ *balı-lar* ‘child-PL’), vowel devoicing and consonantalization (/it/ [ʔiʰtʰ] ‘dog’), and relatively weak vowel harmony of the apical-velar type (*Qäshqär* ‘Kashgar’, *öt-kän* ‘pass-NARR’).

In morphology, a nonanterior imperfective (present/future) is realized with a grammaticalized converbial form of the old copula *-A-dur*, as the suffix *-idu* (*bar-idu* ‘S/he goes’). There are extensive actional/aspectual light verbs (helping verbs). About forty percent of the lexicon are Perso-Arabic copies; Chinese and Russian copies each constitute less than 5% of the modern Uyghur lexicon. From the 14–15th centuries, Persian copies increased to nearly 50% of the lexicon, particularly for abstract ideas and concrete objects; most other copies are from Arabic through Persian. Technical vocabulary tends to come from European languages, particularly Russian, though since the 1970’s, Chinese technical vocabulary dominates.

The *classification* of modern Uyghur still awaits empirical refinement. In terms of linguistic features, there is a clear South-North division of modern Uyghur varieties, with the varieties in the oases to the extreme southern Tarim Basin forming one group, and northern varieties (the northern Tarim oases, the Junggarian Basin, and Ghulja) forming another. Between these two, the variety of Kashgar and environs shares characteristics with both northern and southern types. In addition, the language of Lop Nor—which in this author’s opinion is likely not Uyghur at all—has been classified as a third major “dialect” division of Uyghur. Thus, traditional classifications identify three main “dialects”, consisting of several “vernaculars.” With small variations, all of these classifications are basically the same 3 groups (Tenishev 1984:4, Baskakov 1960, Kaidarov 1969:56ff, Osmanov 1990; Hahn 1998):

(1) Central [Northern]: (T: Turfan, Kuchar, Aqsu, Maralbeshi, Yarkand), also Qumul, Ghulja/Yili, Dolan, Tarim

(2) Southern: (T: Hotan, Guma, Lop, Cheriya, Keriya) (some would include Kashghar and A(r)tush in this category).⁵

⁵ There is general agreement of the South-North (“Central”) division, as well as of which oases constitute “Central” Uyghur,

The varieties that can reliably be identified as modern Uyghur end here. The above authors also identify a third “Uyghur dialect”, “Eastern”: the Lopnur “dialect,” but it is best considered a variety of Kipchak. Please see the Kipchak section for details.

Classifications appear to have been based on an ideological imperative to identify all the languages of the sedentary Turkic speakers of modern Xinjiang as “Uyghur,” and to subclassify them according to the spatial dimensions of the Tarim Basin. Thus, traditional classifications have given us “north, south and east” Uyghur, and have included Lops and Dolans and (at least officially) Eynus as “Uyghurs.” the varieties of Lopnur “Uyghur” (see Kipchak).

The criteria used to classify the Uyghur dialects have included pronunciation (e.g. rounding harmony *joldaš* vs. *joldoš* ‘friend’ and consonant assimilation: /+lAr/ *qiz-zar* ‘girl-pl.’ (Osmanov id., Tenishev id.); suffix morphology (e.g. the present-future tense first-person singular suffix *bar-imen~idimen~itmen* ‘I go/will go’ (Osmanov, Tenishev), and the abilitative suffix *-al/äl~jal/jäl*); and various idiosyncratic vocabulary items.

One variety of Uyghur in the Tarim basin, in Kälpin, has the same preconsonantalization as in Sarig Yuğur: Kälpin aht ‘horse’.

2.2. Uzbek

EGIDS 8a Moribund (according to the *Ethnologue*: 5a “dispersed”)⁶

Endonym: [øzbək]Exonym: Wuzebieke 乌孜别克族, Uzbek

Classification: Uzbek, Northern

The Uzbeks in China reside largely (85%) in western and southern cities, especially in Yining, but also Chöchäk, Kashgar, Yarkand, Qarghilik and Ürümchi. Uzbeks originally came from the Ferghana Valley and environs as traders and craftspeople, especially to Yarkand during the Mongol Yuan period, and later to Kashgar, Yarkand, and Aqsu during the 1750s after the Manchu Qing conquest of the Junggars. Merchant caravans. Besides being tradespeople, they were also farmers,.



Only 10,569 (according to the 2010 census nationally) count as Uzbeks in China, a decline from 12,370 in 2000.⁷ An unknown percentage of them actually speak the language; all Xinjiang Uzbeks speak Uyghur. Many also use Kazakh and Mandarin. Uzbeks tend to be well-educated and report a 98% literacy rate (in Chinese, according to the 2000 census). Literacy in Turkic is via Uyghur, since only a few Uzbek-language books are published each year (in a virtually identical Arabic-based orthography to that of Chinese Uyghur.

As a Southeastern Turkic language, Uzbek is structurally extremely close to Uyghur; constant contact with the latter has ensured that differences between Uzbek and Uyghur in Xinjiang are largely in pronunciation. Chinese Uzbek and Uyghur share the same phonemic inventory (*b p d t g k q f s z ž š č j x ğ h m n ŋ l r w j ; a ä e i o u ö ü*) but the distribution and realization of these phonemes

which occupies 75% of the Uyghur area and 80% of its population (Osmanov 1990:58). of the Uyghur-speaking population. The main point of contention among scholars has been if Kashgar and A(r)tush varieties belong to the Southern or the Central group. Also, the “Central” varieties were subdivided into north, east, and south varieties (id.).
6 The *Ethnologue* also claims the language is “vigorous,” which is only true of Uzbekistani Uzbek.
7 For an alternate speaker figure, 5,000 was cited (Chen 1997).

differs somewhat. Conservative features include Xinjiang and Standard Uzbek (of Uzbekistan) both lack Uyghur’s vowel raising (e.g. Uz. *anča* : Uy. *ančä* ‘much’, Uz. *bala-lar*, Uy. *bali-lar* ‘children’). The innovations that Uzbek has undergone in contact with Persian are also present in Xinjiang Uzbek: vowel derounding (Uz. *bişik* : Uy. *böšük* ‘cradle’) and vowel disharmony, including the realization of /a/ as [ɔ] (e.g. *arqa* [ɔrɕʰa]: Uy. [arɕʰa] ‘back’). In Chinese Uzbek, /e/ has a wider distribution than in Uyghur: /e/ occurs not only in unstressed initial syllables (Uy., Uz. *keräk* ‘necessary’) and loanwords (Uy., Uz. *telefon*), but in Chinese Uzbek also in stressed initial syllables, as long as they are closed: Ch. Uz. *jer* : Uy. *jär*).

Where Xinjiang and Standard Uzbek differ is that Xinjiang Uzbek has under Uyghur influence has re-acquired a distinction between high rounded vowels /u/ : /ü/ and /o/ : /ö/. Thus Std. Uz. *guzäl* : XJ Uz., Uy. *güzäl* ‘beautiful’; Std. Uz. *kol* : XJ Uz., Uy. *köl* ‘lake’.

In the lexicon, Xinjiang Uzbek, like Uyghur, has also acquired many Chinese loans and lacks many of the Russian loanwords that Standard Uzbek has. Unlike Uyghur, however, Xinjiang Uzbek has preserved some of the Kipchaq stratum that is also present in Standard Uzbek, e.g. *säpsäp* ‘dowry’. (The Chinese online encyclopedia Baidu.com makes the erroneous and ideological claim that XJ and Std. Uzbek share “only a 50% similarity”). Xinjiang Uzbek has no official orthography (the Perso-Arabic Uyghur script, Cyrillic, or Latin is used), no media outlets or schools in the language. Uzbeks have maintained the language as a domestic vernacular (primarily in Yili) but use Uyghur (together with Mandarin and Kazakh) outside the home.

3. The Kïpchak languages

The Kïpchak languages of China are Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Tatar – all officially recognized groups. In addition, Lopnur Turkic (which is officially classified as “Uyghur”) also should be classed as Kïpchak.

3.1. Kazakh

EGIDS: Level 3 (Trade); Status: Vigorous, Used in Wider communication.

Classification: West-Central Kïpchak - Central Asian sub-branch.

Endonym: [qazax]Exonym: *Hasake* 哈萨克族, Kazak, Kazax, Qazaq.

Kazakh is a sub-regional lingua franca, used by a number of groups in northwestern Xinjiang (Dwyer 1998) and cannot be considered endangered; these languages “serve important functions for business and intergroup communication. They are learned outside of the home either formally or informally and often have a standardized (though perhaps not officially sanctioned) written form” (Lewis and Simons 2010).

The Kazakhs numbered 1,462,588 (2010 census), the overwhelming majority of which are monolingual speakers (Ethnologue 2015). They primarily live in northwest and northern Xinjiang in the Yili valley and the Junggarian Basin (esp. Altai), as well as in Möri/Barköl (Mulei/Balikun) counties, and the Haxi Mongolian Autonomous. Some live in Gansu (Aqsu county) and Qinghai provinces. Chinese Kazakhs have a ‘double minority’ status, in that their language is subordinate to the regional lingua franca, Uyghur. So while spoken Kazakh is vigorous (among Kazakhs at least) and language attitudes are uniformly positive, Uyghur is omnipresent, and a sizable number (about 15%) use Mandarin, too. Kazakh, in turn, as a local



lingua franca (or subregional interlanguage) for certain Turko-Mongolic speakers of northern Xinjiang, including Oirats, Dauers, Tuvans, and Tatars, as well as the multilingual Tungusic-speaking Sibe. Those Chinese Kazakhs who are literate in their own language (97% in the 2000 census) use a Perso-Arabic script that differs slightly from that of Uyghur and Uzbek. There are a limited number of books, journals, and broadcast media available in Kazakh (the Urumqi People’s Broadcasting and the Xinjiang People’s Station, broadcast in Mandarin, Uyghur, Kazakh and Oirat Mongolian).

The language differs from Kazakhstani Kazakh primarily in the fairly trivial ways discussed in section 1 above; since it is a well-described language, any grammar can be consulted for the features common to both varieties, e.g. *q* appearing mostly in the literary languages as in *qabar* ‘news’.

The minor differences can be summarized as follows. While colloquial Kazakh on both sides of the Pamirs lacked *v*, *f*, and *ʈ*, these non-native sounds are still rendered *w*, *p*, and *s* more widely in Chinese Kazakh. Thus, we’d be much more likely to hear [pæmilija] in Chinese Kazakh than [familija]. Colloquial Chinese Kazakh is likely to have the metathesized forms, *čaqpi* [ʧaqpə] ‘axe’, cf. *šäkpī* [ʃækpi] ‘hat’ (cf. Kazakhstani Kazakh *šapqī* ‘axe’, *šapke* ‘hat’). The latter two examples also show ChK. *č* occurring only a variant of *š*. Rounding harmony is slightly better preserved in Chinese than Kazakhstani Kazakh stems (*žürüsti*, *qulun* vs. *žüristi*, *qulīn*). The plural suffix +*LAr* in Chinese Kazakh shows the first consonant in free variation between *l*~*d* (*taw-lar~dar* ‘mountains’, *bala-lar~dar* ‘children’), whereas Kazakhstani Kazakh shows an invariable lateral form: *tawlar*, *bala-lar* (Li 1992). In the lexicon, besides the obvious Chinese loans in Chinese Kazakh, in the Turko-Mongolic lexicon, there are very few differences. These include e.g. ChK. *tartpa* vs. KazK. *shalgī* ‘sickle’, *sibirtki* vs. *sīpīrgīsh* ‘broom’, and *yälägän* vs. *shilapsin* ‘basin’ (Li 1992). Contact with Uyghur has had a recent impact on the lexicon and morphophonology of Chinese Kazakh.

3.2. Tarim Kyrgyz

Status: 5 Written.⁸

Classification: Kīpchak - Altay-Kyrgyz sub-branch

Endonym: [qırkız] Exonym: *Ji’erjisi* 吉尔吉斯族, *Kirgiz*, (*K’erke’ze* refers only to the Kyrgyz west of the Pamirs, and never of the Chinese Kyrgyz).



Kyrgyz in China numbered 186,708 in the 2010 census. The number of speakers was said to be 60,000 Northern Kirghiz and 40,000 Southern Kirghiz in 2000 (Shearer and Sun 2002). The population today is widely spread, though centered around the mountainous areas to the north of Aqsu in the Tarim basin, including the Qizilsu Kyrgyz Autonomous County, where 80% of the Kyrgyz in China live (Qizilsu 1982). Historically, it is likely that the Kyrgyz ranged and lived also further eastward in the Tarim basin, including possibly in the Lop Nur area, given the Kyrgyz-like features of the Turkic spoken there (see 3.4 below, Lopnur). Small Kyrgyz groups are located to the north in the Ghulja valley and to the southwest near the Afghan border, i.e. in Wuqia, Akqi, Akto, Tekes, Zhaosu, Baicheng, and Wushi counties.

As with Uyghur and Kazakh, Chinese Kyrgyz enjoys status as a statutory provincial language in

8 The *Ethnologue* rates Kyrgyz as an EGIDS 2, but its provincial status is *de facto* limited to having a standardized written language; its geographic scope is extremely small and thus does not merit even sub-regional status as Kazakh does (see below and Dwyer 1998).

Xinjiang, with limited books, media, and some primary and secondary schooling in the language and use in most domains. Speakers have uniformly positive attitudes and many older speakers are monolingual. Chinese Kyrgyz, like Chinese Kazakhs, also use Uyghur and Mandarin as primary regional languages; the small number of Chinese Kyrgyz who inhabit the mountainous Pamiri region also use Dari as an interlanguage. In turn, Kyrgyz is used as a local interlanguage by Sariqolis (who are erroneously referred to as *Tajiks*).

Written Kyrgyz in China has been standardized to an Arabic-based orthography that is similar to that for Chinese Kazakh. These orthographies differ from the Arabic-based Uyghur orthography primarily in that the hamza is not required to precede vowel-initial words. In all three orthographies, front/back vowel distinctions are consistently represented, except for *i/ï*, which are both represented as *i*. These two sounds are claimed in most grammars to have ‘merged’ in these three languages; while there is clearly no phonemic distinction between *i/ï* in the modern languages, *i~ï* variation occurs according to the backness of the word. The literacy rate in the L1 may reach as high as 80%–85%, whereas literacy in Chinese is 59%⁹

Tarim basin Kyrgyz preserves most Old Turkic vowel length distinctions, with the exception of *ii/ïï* (it has *aa, ää, oo, öö, uu, üü* and *ii*). Like CIS Kyrgyz, it has rounding and backness harmony in vowels, and has typical Kipchak consonant harmony (e.g. plural +*LAr*: *lar/ler/lor/lör/dar/der/dor/dör/tar/ter/tor/tör*). In morphology, Tarim Kyrgyz has six cases; dative and directive are one. The vaunted north-south distinction between Kyrgyz varieties is based on the Qizilsu river, where the southern variety has more Uyghur influence than that of the north (Li 1992). These are fairly trivial distinctions in e.g. voicing, in the south: [p p t k] *paja* ‘haystack,’ *palta* ‘axe,’ *tarbáz* ‘watermelon,’ *kim* ‘who?’ vs. the north: [m b d g] *maja, gim* etc. (Li 1992).

Chinese Kyrgyz is distinct from Fuyü Gïrgïs of Manchuria: the latter is not a Kipchak language at all, see section 4.2 below.

3.3. Tatar

Endangerment status: 8b moribund (Tatar populations outside of China are recognized, EGIDS 7 (*Ethnologue*))

Endonym: [tatar]Exonym: *Tata’er* 塔塔尔族, historically Dadan; Tartar

Classification: Kipchak - West-Central Branch, Volga-Kipchak sub-branch.

The Chinese Tatars constitute the smallest officially recognized ethnic group in China; their numbers have declined from from 4,873 in 1990 to 3,556 in 2010. The number of speakers may be as low as 800 in China (Chen and Lei 1985). Most are descendants of 19th century Volga Tatars, who fled Czarist influence. Today, they live in northwestern Xinjiang herding areas (Burqin, Qitai) and cities (Ghulja, Chöchäk, Altay) and Ürümchi. Tatar has influenced Chöchäk Uyghur and Kazakh.

Language domains are limited to conversation and singing, and to older adults. Younger Tatars speak Uyghur and/or Kazakh. The Tatar language is therefore shifting rapidly to Uyghur and Kazakh, whose contact effects are substantial. Since there is no writing system for Tatar in China, written Kazakh and Uyghur are used as instead as literary



9 <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/kir>

languages. Chinese Tatars tend to be highly educated and multilingual, with most all literate in Chinese, Kazakh and Uyghur. (2000 census, via the *Ethnologue*.¹⁰

Their language is an archaic variety of Tatar combined with innovations from Southeastern Turkic and Xinjiang Kïpchak (primarily Kazakh). Such convergence features in the sounds system include the despirantization of *f* to *p*, as in colloquial Uyghur (Tat., Uy. *däptär* ‘notebook’), and the presence of initial *ǰ*- [dʒ] (‘land, earth’) as in Kïpchak. Chinese Tatar also frequently has voiced initials stops (e.g. *dürt* ‘four’), unlike Uyghur. Vowel harmony is limited to backness (second syllables have *e*, *ä* or *ï*, *a*). Disharmonic stems are also common (e.g. CTat. *biliq* ‘fish,’ *pialä* ‘dish’ (cf. Volga Tat. *baliq*, *pïyala*). Chinese Tatar has a vowel height inversion that resembles neither Qazan Tatar nor modern Uyghur: CTat *e*: Uy. *i* (*tel* ‘tongue’); CTat *i* (*min* ‘I’) : Uy. *ä* ; CTat *o* (*toz* ‘salt’): Uy. *u*, *kön* ‘day’, *qul* ‘arm’:

CTat	e	i	o	ö	u
Uy	ï	ä	u	ü	o

Morphological innovations include the extensive use of aspect/actional light verbs as the second verb in a *V₁-(y)(I)p V₂* construction. Other innovations (also under Uyghur influence) in non-finite morphology include the use of the simultative *-GAč* (and its derivative *-GAčKA* ‘because’), the limitative *-Gičä*, and the purposive *-Gali*.

The lexicon, with some exceptions, closely resembles that of modern Uyghur, e.g. CTat, Uy. *čiragh* ‘lamp,’ *čapan* ‘chapan, Central Asian overcoat’ CTat., Uy. *qulup* ‘lock’. Some of these items are absent in modern Qazan Tatar, though present early 20th c. Tatar (Yusupova et al. 2013:169). Certain terms, however appear to be maintained from early 20th c. Tatar and not present in either Uyghur or modern Qazan Tatar, e.g. CTat. *klit* (Uy. *ačquč*, CKaz *ašquš*) ‘key.’

3.4. Lopnur Turkic (“Lopnur Uyghur”)

EGIDS: 9. Moribund.

Endonym: [loptuq]Exonym: Lopliq, Lopluq, Lobnur

Classification: Altay-Kyrgyz Turkic. Known erroneously as Lopnur “Uyghur”, the Lopnur variety belongs to the Kïpchak subgroup, but with some archaic features and also Southeastern Turkic influence via Uyghur and its antecedents.

The genitive case is an example of an archaic feature (+*NI*, not +*ning* as in modern Uyghur, resulting in merger with accusative +*ni*) with Kïpchak morphophonology: the consonant and vowel are maximally harmonic (vowel backness and roundness, consonant is homorganic with preceding consonant, *n* after vowel- and glide-final stems), e.g.: *ǰugan-ni* ‘woman who has already had a child-GEN/ACC’, *öj-nü* ‘home-GEN/ACC’ (cf. Std. Uy. *ǰuwan-nïng*, *öj-nïng*), *söz-üm-mü* ‘word-1POSS-GEN/ACC’ ‘my word’, *at-tï* ‘horse-GEN/ACC’, *jük-kü* ‘load-GEN/ACC’, note the voiceless finals in *bäk-ki* ‘beg ruler-GEN/ACC’ and *baq-qï* ‘garden-GEN/ACC’. Sibilants show full to partial harmony: *siz-zi* ‘you-GEN/ACC’, but *nas-sï* ‘snuff-GEN/ACC’, *umash-tï* ‘gruel-GEN/ACC’, *jighash-tï* ‘firewood-GEN/ACC’ (Mirsultan 1999).

An example of the influence of Southeastern Turkic is the general tendency of postpositions or case suffixes to be governed by the (southeastern type) genitive +*NIng* as a liaison string after personal and demonstrative pronouns, e.g.: *Bu jutta turmajdimän ajrilsam siz-zïng wilen* ‘If I am separated from you, I will not stay in this place’ (Osmanov 1999:101).

Another notable feature includes the absence of initial **j*- before *i*: *iraq* ‘far’, *ipäk* ‘silk’, but cf. *jigash* ‘firewood’ (id.).

10 <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/tat>

4. Yenisei Turkic

4.1. Sarıg Yuğur

EGIDS status: 8a (Moribund) — The only remaining active users of the language are members of the grandparent generation and older.

Endonym: [sari joʁir]Exonyms: Ch. *Xibu Yugu* 西部裕固族, Western Yuğur, Sari Yogur, Sarıg, Sarygh Uyghur, Sary-Uighur, Yellow Uighur

Classification: Yenisei Turkic.

The Sarıg Yuğurs number only 4,600 (Bradley 2007), with an ethnic population of 7,000 (Bradley 2007). They reside primarily in the western part of Gansu province’s Sunan Yuğur Autonomous County in the Hexi corridor near Zhangye (historical Ganzhou). In the same area live the Mongolic-speaking Shera Yuğur (a.k.a. Eastern Yuğur). Sarıg Yuğurs migrated from Siberia during the breakup of the Old Turkic khanate in the 9th century; their language most closely resembles South Siberian Turkic but also contains Old Turkic archaisms such as its counting system and the use of the copula *dro* (< *dur*).

The language is moribund due to the small population and very restricted domains for its use (conversation, trade, religious practice, and oral literature). Education is in Chinese, with the majority becoming literate in Chinese. Despite the lack of an orthography or schools, speakers have favorable attitudes towards their language.¹¹



Its phoneme inventory closely resembles that of Salar, particularly the presence of a retroflex obstruent series ξ z ξ^h ξ and a palatal series ϵ ϵ^h ϵ (rather than palato-alveolar as in other Turkic languages), and initial obstruent contrasts being based on aspiration rather than voicing, all showing the result of heavy contact with Sinitic and Tibetan (Dwyer 2007). The lexicon, too, shows contact with Sinitic, Tibetan, and to a lesser degree, Mongolian., particularly given the neighboring Shera Yuğur language.

In phonology, vowel-voiceless consonant interactions have resulted in vowel spirantization (a.k.a. preaspiration) in Sarıg Yuğur, e.g. *a^ht* ‘horse,’ a feature also found to a lesser degree in Salar and the Kälpin variety of Uyghur (Dwyer 2000). This consonantalization corresponds to glottalization in Tuvan and Tofa. Vowel harmony is largely absent.

Sarıg Yuğur morphosyntax also shows the unmistakable influence of Sinitic and Tibetan: the preference for pronominal subject marking and subsequent loss of personal verbal agreement markers; the absence (largely) of possessive marking; and the elevation of perspective (a.k.a. evidentiality) marking to nearly obligatory for all declarative utterances. The latter shows the influence of Tibetan, though the morphemes are Turkic. For example in the following narrative utterance: *iške köz par mī-dro* two eye-EXIST COP-XINFR ‘He has two eyes.’ (Malov 1967, transcription normalized here), we can observe the absence of possessive marking on ‘eye’.

To non-Turkologists, perhaps the most well-known feature of Sarıg Yuğur is its anticipating counting system, a remnant from Old Turkic. So *per otus* one thirty ‘twenty-one’ is expressed as ‘one (on the way to) thirty’.

11 Ethnologue <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/ybe>

In terms of documentation, the language has two dictionaries (Lei 1992, Malov 1957); three grammars (Malov 1957, Tennishev 1976a, and Roos 2000), and two collections of texts (Malov 1967, Roos 2000).

4.2. Gïrgïs (Fuyü Kyrgyz)

EGIDS status: 8b (Nearly extinct)

Endonym: [qərkəs] Exonym: Fuyü Gïrgïs, Fuyü Kyrgyz, Manchurian Kirghiz

Classification: Yenisei Turkic - Khakas [kjh]

The Fuyü Gïrgïs self-identify as “Kyrgyz,” and Fuyü 富裕 is the name of the county, north of Qiqihar, in western Heilongjiang province (Manchuria). While those self-identifying as such may number up to 800 (Salminen 2007) or 900 (Janhunen 1996), there is only at most a handful of rememberers who are only semi-speakers; the language is moribund. (Salminen 2007 optimistically mentions “ten speakers,” but this number appears to reflect the situation of the 1980s; since the 2000s, there are only rememberers.) They are officially recognized as Chinese Kyrgyz (Ch. *Ji’erjisi* 吉尔吉斯), but the language variety is South Siberian Turkic, not Kïpchak. They are likely Oirat Mongolian in origin (local Mongols used to call them *Oirat* before 1949), they have lived in Manchuria since the late 18th century, today are on the left bank of the Nenjiang river in Wujiazi village. Originally pastoralists, they came be semi-agriculturalists who practiced both shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism. The Fuyü Gïrgïs number about 1100, and in the 1980s, there were reportedly about 100 households of speakers (Hu and Imart 1987:2–3). Today there are no speakers and only a few rememberers of the language left; Chinese influence is pervasive.

The language is moribund; a few speakers can remember a few words. In the 1980s, apparently about 10 very old people were fluent. There is no writing system and no support for the language. Apart from elderly rememberers of a few lexical items, everyone (from child through middle and early old age) speaks primarily Mandarin Chinese, and secondarily Mongolian.

Fuyü Gïrgïs is a variety of Khakas, belonging to the Yenisei (a.k.a. Altay-Sayan) subgroup. Comparisons of Gïrgïs with Xinjiang Kyrgyz (Hu 1983, Tennishev 1997), and with south Siberian Turkic languages such as Khakas (Hu and Imart 1987, Schönig 1997, 1998) have shown that Gïrgïs diverges sharply from Kïpchak Turkic, and is a South Siberian Turkic language, with some Mongolian and Chinese features.

South Siberian features include medial *-z-* < Old Turkic **d* as in *azax* ‘foot,’ *büzex* ‘high,’ *gozon* ‘hare.’ A portion of OT voiceless consonants are realized as voiced in Fuyü, e.g. *gem* ‘who?’ *güz* ‘autumn.’

FY Gïrgïs has a seven-vowel system (*a ä i o ö u ü*) with front and back oppositions except for /i/. Only secondary vowel length exists, the result of deletion (e.g. *aas* ‘mouth,’ *too* ‘mountain’ < *ağız*, *tag*); Hu and Imart (1987:24–25) report 8 long vowels (with the addition of /ee/). The consonantal inventory is a typical one for Chinese Turkic languages, with stops contrasting phonemically for voicing, alveolar and palato-alveolar spirant series (*s z ʃ ʒ ʧ ʤ*). As in Salar and Sarıg Yuğur, the phonetic realizations of these obstruents has been affected by Chinese, such that *p/b t/d k/g q/ç* contrast in aspiration, not voicing, at least in Chinese loanwords, or the pairs *p/b t/d k/g q/ç* are in free variation between aspiration and voicing.

An /r/ allophone, [ʀ], appears in Chinese loans (*dʒazän* ‘Tibetan person’). Gïrgïs displays vowel harmony (largely backness, with occasional rounding harmony) as well as consonant harmony in suffixes (Hu and Imart 1987:24–25). For example, plural *+LAR* has consonant voicing harmony and sonorant dissimilation (*qoj-lar* ‘sheep’ vs. *gol-dar* ‘hands’), but not the vowel rounding harmony present in Xinjiang Kyrgyz (which also has *+lor/lör/dor/dör/tor/tör*), though some report rounding harmony limited to back vowels in some Fuyü examples (*qoj-lor* ‘sheep’, *qol-dor* ‘hands’). These limited vowel and consonant harmony features can also be seen in the interrogative *MA*, realized as *ma/me/ba/be/pa/pe*. In stems, there is a certain amount of disharmony in backness, e.g. *qadex* ‘hard.’

The maximal syllable shape is (C)V(C); (CVC₁C₂ is possible where C₁ is *r/l* and C₂ is a voiceless stop, e.g. *durt* ‘four’). Like Salar, Gïrgïs the spirantization of final *-G > x* and final devoicing are common (*yas* ‘spring’ < *yaz*).

In the lexicon, Fuyü Gïrgïs shows Yenisein characteristics. The numerals 40–90 are *durdon*, *bi[z]en*, *alten*, *čiten*, *sigi[z]en*, *toğuzon*. The reflexive pronoun is *bos*. The language has a number of Mongolian loans: *mürün* ‘river,’ *dalaj* ‘ocean’; the cardinal directions *asar* ‘east,’ *usar* ‘west,’ *ilger* ‘south,’ *geder* ‘north’; *arben* ‘many,’ *noğon* ‘green.’ It has and virtually no Arabic or Persian loans.

In grammar, Fuyü Gïrgïs also shows Yenisei rather than Kïpchak features. Fuyü usually has the pronominal first person plural verbal agreement ending *-bes/bis* (rather than the ‘possessive type’ *-k/q*) e.g. for the past tense; thus, Fuyü *bar-de-k* ‘we went’ vs. Xinjiang Kyrgyz *bar-de-bes*. Historically, the past tense negative suffix was *-been/peen-*: *bar-been-min* (cf. XJ Kyrgyz *bar-ba-ğan-men*) ‘I didn’t go.’ There are three imperfectives, present *-de/te*: *bar-de-min* ‘I am going’ (cf. XJ Kyrgyz *bar-a jat-a-män*); present-future: *-A(j)* (*bar-a-men* ‘I go’), negated with *-jool-* [dʒo:l]: *bar-jool-min* ‘I won’t go’, cf. XJ Kyrgyz *bar-ba-j-men*). Finally there is a present “progressive” *-tur-*: *bar-tur-min*.

Fuyü distinguishes directive *-sar* for non-human objects from the dative case; XJ Kyrgyz does not distinguish dative and directive.

The main study to date is Hu and Imart (1997). On classification, see Schöniß 1998; on the lexicon, see Li Y. et al. 2007. Other references include Doerfer 1997.

4.3. Tuvan

EGIDS status: 6b (Threatened). Language of recognized nationality: Mongolian.

Endonym [tɪvɑ] Exonym: Ch. *Tuwa* 图瓦族, Dyba, Kök Mungak, Tuvin, Tuwa

Classification: South Siberian - Sayan Turkic (ISO 639-3 tyv)

The Tuvans of China numbered 3260 (2010 census), with approximately 2,400 speakers (Wu 1999). They are without ethnic *minzu* status in China, where Tuvans are officially grouped with Mongols. One of the few Turkic groups that still lives predominantly from animal husbandry (with some farming), they live in Altai county (aimaq) in Altay prefecture in northern Xinjiang, coterminous to the Tuva Republic. Tuvans also live in Burjin, Habahe, and Fuyun. They call themselves (*Kök-*)*Monchaq* or *Tuwa*; the language is generally used in the familial domain, and to a limited extent in communication with local Kazakhs and Oirat Mongols. The local lingua franca is Kazakh. Primary and some secondary schooling is available to the Tuvans in Mongolian, Kazakh (especially in Alaxaak and Kökdogay) and Mandarin Chinese, with secondary and tertiary schooling primarily or exclusively in Mandarin. Chinese Tuvan lacks a writing system; it is sometimes written in the (Sogdian) Mongolian script. They are one of a small number of Chinese Turkic languages that are Buddhists (in addition to Sarïg Yuğur).

Maintenance of the language is facilitated by their geographic isolation, as well as by positive attitudes towards the language. The main Chinese Tuvan populations live in compact communities in valleys around Kanas lake, several hours from the nearest town. These communities were until recently largely only Tuvan; a recent law mandating that businesses there be run only by Tuvans has hastened some intermarriage with Han entrepreneurs (based on my July 2015 interviews in Hom and Kanas).

In phonetics, Chinese Tuvan also preserves many of the OT phonetic distinctions that Siberian Tuva has, such as OT *d*: OT *adigh*, Sib. Tuva *adig*, C.Tuva *adix*; OT *qud-* ‘pour’, cf. *kut-* ‘burn’ (cf. Uy., Kaz. *quy-*). Where Chinese Tuvan diverges from Tuvan spoken to the north is the lack of pharyngealization: *at* ‘horse’ (cf. *a^ht*), *et* ‘meat,’ *ot* ‘grass.’ Vowel harmony is confined to backness distinctions, e.g. locative *-da/de/ta/te*, conditional *-za/sa/ze/se*. In these ways, Chinese Tuvan more closely resembles Kazakh and Uyghur.

In morphological forms, however, Chinese Tuvan is closer to Siberian Turkic than Kïpchak or SE Turkic, e.g. the first person optative *-Ayn* (Uy, Kaz. *-Ay*), and the negative converb, Ch. and Sib. Tuvan *-BAyn* (cf. Uy, Kaz. *-mAy*).

In the lexicon, the Mongolian, Kazakh, and Chinese influences on the language is particularly strong, leading to a divergence with Siberian Tuva. For example, OT *uruq* ‘rope’ is realized in Siberian Tuvan and Khakas as *uruq* ‘lasso’, but Chinese Tuvan, Uyghur, and Uzbek have **arğamča*, a conflation of OT **uruq* and Kipchak **arqan* ‘rope’ (cf. Kaz., Kyr. *arqan*). Borrowings from Chinese are predominantly in the terminology of territorial administrative units and tools of daily use (television, computer, refrigerator). References on Xinjiang Tuva include Mongush 1996 and Mawkanuli 1999.

As can be seen from the above descriptions, three Northeastern Turkic languages are represented in China. Sarıg Yuğur and Fuyü Gırğıs represent different branches of South Siberian *azaq*-Turkic, while Tuvan represents Sayan Turkic. We turn now to the only Southwestern Turkic language in China, Salar.

5. Oghuz - Salar

EGIDS status: 7 (shifting) (Ethnologue: 6b, threatened)

Endonym: [sala] Exonym: *Sala* 撒拉族, Salar (slr)

Classification: peripheral - mixed; Eastern Salar has Chinese and Tibetan adstrata (especially lexicon and phonology); Western Salar has Uyghur and Kazakh adstrata.



The Salars are likely related to the modern Salor-Turkmen, likely Western Turkestan (Central Asian) origins, from area south of present-day Samarkand. They arrived in Amdo Tibet in the 14th c. C.E. About 1500 Salars moved to Xinjiang in the late 18th and late 19th centuries. The Salars numbered 130,607 in the 2010 Chinese census and their population is increasing; of these, at least 80% are speakers. Most live in Amdo Tibet, primarily in Xunhua and Hualong counties (Qinghai province) and Jishishan county (Gansu province); nearly 4000 others live in Yili (Ghulja) county in Xinjiang. The former areas in Qinghai and Gansu constitute Eastern Salar (ES); the Xinjiang variety is Western Salar (WS).

In terms of language use, the majority of L1 speakers use Salar as bilinguals (Salar-Chinese or Salar-Amdo Tibetan in ES, Salar-Kazakh or Uyghur in WS); children are increasingly abandoning the language after acquiring Mandarin

in primary school (Dwyer 1992-2016, personal observation; Ma 2007). The L2 users are primarily male traders. The Ethnologue estimates there are 10,000 monolinguals, primarily older women in informal and domestic domains. Language attitudes are mixed, with speakers viewing their language as both an object of historical pride but of little modern utility. Since there is no official orthography and no schooling available in the language, at most 60% of Salars are only literate in L2 (primarily Mandarin). As Muslims, the Salars have historically embraced most all of the various Sunni orders represented in western China; today, most Salars view themselves as either ‘reformed’ (Ikhwani) or ‘traditional’ (one of several Sufi orders).

The Salar sound inventory has added a retroflex series of obstruents ʂ ʈʂ ʐ; the first two are phonemic in Chinese and Tibetan loans, and all three alternate freely with palato-alveolar obstruents in the rest of the lexicon, e.g. ʂɿpa ‘eighteen’, fatʂo et- ‘be nauseated’, ʊʂʐɿ~ʊʂɿ ‘thief’. A palatal series ɕ ɕ ɕ corresponds to Turkic palatal-alveolar obstruents, e.g. ɕʰiɕ- ‘go out’ (Dwyer 2007). Salar, like Sarıg Yuğur, has high front vowel devoicing and consonantalization, e.g. *ikki* [ʔiʃkʰi] ‘two’ (id.)

In morphology, person agreement marking on verbs has largely been lost, and perspective marking (direct/indirect) is generally required, e.g. *Men geshong-ě var-jī*. ‘I went to town (direct experience).’ *U geshong-ě var-miš*. ‘S/he went to town (indirect experience)’ (Dwyer 1992 in situ research).

In lexis, the personal pronoun paradigm entirely lacks **siz*; *sen* and *seler* are the sole second person singular and plural pronouns, respectively. The first person plural pronoun is *piser*. Besides Oghuz (SW) Turkic lexemes such as *seji* ‘sparrow’, some lexemes reflect South Siberian Turkic phonology, e.g. *čorge-~čörge-* ‘spin, twist, weave’, cf. Tuvan *čörge-*, Common Turkic *yörge-* ‘wrap up; swaddle’ (Dwyer 2007).

The two Salar varieties show language contact effects; in phonetics, morphosyntax and lexis, Eastern Salar more closely resembles Mandarin, while Western Salar has some Uyghur features. For example, Eastern Salar has merged front round *ü ö* with unrounded vowels *u o*, e.g. *uš-uč* ‘three’, *gor-* [kor-] ‘see’; Western Salar preserves the front/back contrasts (e.g. ES *kul-* / WS *kül-* ‘laugh’ as below). For actional and aspect nuances in the predicate, Eastern Salar uses the Sinitic/Bodic strategy of an adverb + main verb, whereas Western Salar uses the Turkic strategy of a main verb + a light (helping) verb:

ESU *lorčuqqa kule-miš*. [s/he suddenly laugh-PERF.indir] ‘S/he burst out laughing’

WS *U kül yür-jī*. [s/he laugh go-PERF.dir] (Dwyer 1992 in situ research)

Two Chinese-Salar dictionaries of Salar currently exist (Lin 1992, Han and Ma 2010). Other major studies of the language are Major previous studies: Tenishev (1964, 1976a), Dwyer (2007).

6. Concluding remarks

The Turkic languages of China, whether endangered or not, clearly show both direct inheritances from their respective Turkic families as well as areal language-contact effects. The personal pronouns **biz* and **siz* can be used as an example of the range of inherited features found in Chinese Turkic languages. It is primarily Chinese Kazakh and Uyghur which have balanced paradigms with reflexes of both **biz* and **siz*, and distinguish informal and polite forms of the second person (Kaz. *biz*; *sen*, *siz*, *sender*, *sizder*; Uig. *biz*; *sen*, *siz*, *siler*, *sizler*). Salar, Sarıg Yuğur, Tuvan, and Fuyü lack a second person polite form (Salar, SY *sen*, *seler*; Tuva *sen*, *siler-sirer*; Fuyü *sin*, *sirir*). At least in the case of Oghuz Salar, the lack of a second person polite form is an innovation, as e.g. Turkmen maintains this distinction. At the same time, many of these modern Chinese Turkic reflexes reflect features of the Turkic subfamilies, e.g. Northeast and Southeast Turkic **biz*: Kazakh, Uyghur *biz*; South Siberian Turkic **Bis*: Ch. Tuvan *bis*, Fuyü *pis*, Sarıg Yuğur *mis-miz-mister*.

The Turkic languages of China, including the endangered ones, show extensive language-contact effects. For example, unsurprisingly the strong Mongolian influence on the Tuvan lexicon is readily apparent; Chinggisid Mongolian also had a small effect on the lexicons of Sarıg Yuğur and Salar. Nonetheless, the phonological and lexical impact of other Siberian Turkic languages is also apparent in all but standard Uyghur and Chinese Kazakh.

The early loans in the lexicons of many of these languages include Indo-European **tümen* ‘10,000’, cf. Tocharian *t(u)mane*; Old Turkic *böz* ‘linen’, cf. Greek *bussos*; O.T. *biti-* ‘to write’, cf. Old Chinese *piet* ‘writing brush.’ Tibetan elements - lexis and perspective marking - are present in Salar.

Mandarin Chinese, being the national language, is present in the lexis of all the Chinese Turkic languages, and also in the morphosyntax (e.g. resultative complements) and discourse particles of all but Chinese Uyghur and Chinese Kazakh. The presence of Mandarin is felt most strongly in those languages that are closer to China proper and have smaller populations.

With the primacy of Mandarin in all but the private sphere - education, the media, trade, and intergroup communication - even those relatively non-endangered Turkic languages of China can be considered threatened. Further, distinct sub-varieties of major Turkic languages of China (for example, Lopnur, a.k.a. Lopnur «Uyghur», Dolan, etc.), have already all but disappeared, due to the intense homogenizing pressure not of Chinese, but of the standard language, in this case Uyghur.

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Typos in Dwyer 2016d Preprint:

p. 7 Error: š/ʃ are reversed: "Table 5. Cognates in Chinese Turkic Languages (In IPA; [e ə ε ø y j š] = e ě ä ö ü y ʃ, respectively) "

Correct: "Table 5. Cognates in Chinese Turkic Languages (In IPA; [e ə ε ø y j ʃ] = e ě ä ö ü y š, respectively)"

p. 19 Error: "...are Major previous studies: Tenishev (1964)" Correct: "...are Tenishev (1964)"

Italics errors:

p. 10 "One variety of Uyghur in the Tarim basin, in Kälpin, has the same preconsonantalization as in Sarīg Yuğur: Kälpin aht 'horse'."

Correct: One variety of Uyghur in the Tarim basin, in Kälpin, has the same preconsonantalization as in Sarīg Yuğur: Kälpin *aht* 'horse'.

p. 11 Error: säpsäp 'dowry'. Correct: *säpsäp* 'dowry'.

p. 17 Error: present-future: -A(j) Correct: present-future -*A(j)*

p. 17 Error: optative -Ayn Correct: optative -*Ayn*

Tab stop/spacing errors:

p. 10 Error: [øzbək]Exonym Correct: [øzbək] Exonym

p. 12, footnote 8: Error: "EGIDS 2,but" Correct: EGIDS 2, but

p. 13 Error: Endonym: [tatar]Exonym: Correct: Endonym: [tatar] Exonym:

p. 14 Error: [loptuq]Exonym: Correct: [loptuq] Exonym:

p. 16 Error: [qərɤəs]Exonym: Correct: [qərɤəs] Exonym:

p. 17 Error: Endonym [tɪva]Exonym: Correct: Endonym [tɪva] Exonym:

Missing or excess punctuation:

p. 13 Error: 59%9 Correct: 59%. 9

p. 14 Error: (2000 census, via the Ethnologue).10 Correct: (2000 census, via the Ethnologue).10

p. 15 Error: Mongolian., Correct: Mongolian,